

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FEA-01 AEC-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-04 FPC-01 H-01 INR-05

INT-05 L-01 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-03 RSC-01 SAM-01

SCI-02 SP-02 SS-15 STR-01 TRSE-00 FRB-01 PA-01

USIA-06 PRS-01 EUR-08 DRC-01 /090 W

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R 160001Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4281

INFO AMCONSUL BRISBANE

AMCONSUL PERTH

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CANBERRA 6751

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: EGEN, EMIN, ENRG, EINV, AS

SUBJ: GOA RESOURCES POLICY FLAP SUBSIDES

REF: CANBERRA 6669 (NOTAL)

1. DESPITE OCTOBER 10 NEWS STORIES (REFTEL)  
PREDICTING CLASH BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM  
AND MINERALS AND ENERGY MINISTER CONNOR OVER GOA  
RESOURCES POLICY, NO CONFRONTATION HAS OCCURRED  
SINCE PM RETURNED TO AUSTRALIA OCTOBER 13. CONNOR'S  
POLITICAL POSITION, MEANWHILE, SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN  
STRENGTHENED BY SUPPORT OF HIS POLICIES VOICED BY  
OTHER GOA LEADERS. PRESS STORIES HAD CLAIMED THAT  
WHITLAM, AS RESULT HIS TALKS IN WASHINGTON, OTTAWA  
AND NEW YORK, HAD DECIDED TO LIBERALIZE OVERSEAS  
ACCESS TO AUSTRALIAN MINERALS AND ENERGY RESOURCES.

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URANIUM, WHICH CONNOR HAS ADVOCATED LEAVING IN GROUND

TILL WORLD PRICES RISE, WAS ONLY COMMODITY SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED BY PRESS, BUT STORIES IMPLIED FUTURE MAJOR POLICY CHANGES MIGHT AFFECT ALL RESOURCES. (RECENT DEVELOPMENTS ON URANIUM BEING REPORTED SEPTEL.)

2. FOLLOWING OCTOBER 10 PRESS SPECULATION, COMMOR APPEARED ON TELEVISION (A RARE EVENT) TO DENY ANY IMMINENT POLICY CHANGES OR FRICTION BETWEEN WHITLAM AND HIMSELF. DEPUTY PM AND OVERSEAS TRADE MINISTER CAIRNS, FOREIGN MINISTER WILLESEE AND OTHERS VOICED STRONG SUPPORT FOR CONNOR, ALTHOUGH CAIRNS SAID CLARIFICATION OF MINERALS POLICY WOULD BE USEFUL REGARDING AREAS WHERE OVERSEAS INVESTMENT IS NECESSARY FOR DEVELOPMENT. SUBSEQUENTLY, ALAN RENOUF, SECRETARY (PERMANENT HEAD) OF DEPT. OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ACCEPTED FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR BACKGROUND BRIEFING OF PRESS ACCOMPANYING PM WHICH HAD LED TO OCTOBER 10 NEWS STORIES. RENOUF ALSO APOLOGIZED PRIVATELY FOR THE "MISUNDERSTANDING" TO CONNOR, WHO PROMPTLY INFORMED PRESS. WHITLAM TOLD PARLIMENT OCOTOBER 15 THAT BRIEFING HAD NOT BEEN AUTHORIZED OR GIVEN BY HIMSELF, LEAVING RENOUF TO BEAR FULL BRUNT OF BLAME FOR FLAP.

3. EMBASSY COMMENT: ALTHOUGH WHITLAM AND CONNOR HAVE BEEN FIRM POLITICAL ALLIES IN PAST, PRIME MINISTER HAS PRIVATELY PRESSED CONNOR IN PAST TO SPELL OUT RESOURCES POLICIES MORE CLEARLY, PARTICULARLY REGARDING URANIUM. WHILE WHITLAM MAY WELL HAVE INSPIRED RENOUF TO GIVE HIS OFF-THE-RECORD PRESS BRIEFING, IT IS HIGHLY DOUBTFUL THAT PM DELIBERATELY SOUGHT TO SET OFF A PUBLIC SQUABBLE WITH CONNOR, WHOSE NUMBER THREE CABINET RANKING REFLECTS THE STRONG LABOR PARTY SUPPORT HE ENJOYS. CONNOR HAD ALREADY BEGUN TO SOFTEN HIS HARD-LINE STANCE ON URANIUM (SEPTEL) AND CLEARLY HAS WON THIS ROUND. MEANWHILE, RENOUF IS MAIN LOSER FROM PUBLIC SPAT, ALTHOUGH WHITLAM MAY NOT EMERGE UNSCATHED. GREEN

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## Message Attributes

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